2:Seligman & Seligman E-5 (1909-1910) 1932
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

756 waning, but when it was suggested that perhaps an *ajuago* might then have connection this was strenuously denied.

753 Perhaps the commonest cause of sickness was the entrance into a person of the spirit of one of the divine kings, a cure being effected when the spirit could be persuaded to leave its involuntary host. [643] We believe that only the early kings were thought to produce illness in this manner, and certainly the three or four cases into which we inquired were all said to be possessed by Dag. One of these cases, [751] a woman who recovered after two sheep had been sacrificed to Dag, wore bead anklets, and amidst the beads there were threaded small pieces of the conchae of the ears of the goats. These anklets were considered protective against future possession by Dag.

695 Oaths are sworn by Nyakang, or on one of the holy spears from the shrine of Nyakang. Westermann notes that the latter form is used only in judicial procedure: a sheep is killed, and both parties are smeared with its blood, after which they swear by the spear, perjury being followed by death. In swearing by Nyakang his name is often coupled with that of one of the villages in which he has a shrine, e.g. a man may swear by Nyakang of Akurwa. The early kings may also be invoked by name, especially Dag.[1]

695 773 Reference has been made to the cattle belonging to Nyakang and kept at his shrines. In common parlance these are "cows of Nyakang", but besides these there was a mythical herd of mysterious cows from the river also known as the "cows of Nyakang", and from their dung were obtained the "ashes of denying", described by Westermann as follows:—

> "Once Nyikang caught a cow in the river. . . . It had no ears or horns. This cow was the beginning of a sacred herd. . . . They live in the river and come out to feed at night. . . . some say the Dervishes took them, while others affirm that it was the Turks. . . . The ashes were made by burning the dung of the sacred cattle. They are preserved at Wau and other villages dedicated to Nyikang, and are applied in . . . cases of adultery. . . . When the woman has confessed, but the man denies, they take recourse to the 'ashes of denying'. An old chief, taking a spear in his hand, stands erect, and offers the following prayer: 'You Nyikang, the ashes are yours! If this man has not had intercourse with this woman may he escape! But if he has had intercourse with this woman, may he die! If this woman accuses falsely may he escape!' After this the chief takes some of the ashes on his hand and strikes the man with it. Then the one who has sworn falsely, will die."[2]

[1] Op. cit., xliii. [2] Op. cit., xliv.

3:Westermann E-5 (1910) 1912 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

428 587 763 The sons inherit the property of their father. The wives of the deceased father are divided among the children, who may, and in most cases do, marry them, except their own mother. It is said that sometimes, when a husband is very old and infirm, his wives put him to death, in order to get a younger companion. On inheritance vide page 113. INHERITANCE

517 [361] [237] [825] 75 [201] 635 [574] Their chief amusement is dancing. The houses of a village are built in a circle, leaving an open place in their midst. Here the inhabitants assemble in the evening, stretching themselves in the warm ashes or on a skin, or squatting on a piece of ambach; several small fires of cow dung are burning and spread a smoke of strong smell, which is the best protection from mosquito-stings. The events of the day are discussed here, the tobacco pipe and merisa pot going from hand to hand. In the middle of this open place the trunk of a large tree is erected, in which the drums are suspended. With them signals are given in times of danger, but more frequently they are used to accompany the dances of the young people. These public dances are among the greatest events in the lives of the young Shilluks; even old men and women, though not taking an active part, are highly interested in them; sitting before the huts in front of the dancers they constitute a chorus, who accompanies the transactions of the younger generation with loud acclamations or blamings. The dances generally take place during the dry season; they begin at about four o'clock in the afternoon, or, in case there is moonshine, later in the evening, and last from three to five hours or longer. As a rule one village invites its neighbours by a drum signal given in the early morning of the day fixed for a dance. On hearing this signal the young people show a great zeal in preparing their body, hairdress and the ornaments worn on the occasion. They go to the village in groups or single, men and girls separately. Usually the youths perform some war-dance in full arms at first, in which the girls do not partake; they form a large circle in four or two rows, and while the drum is being beaten, begin dancing and singing war songs. The dance consists in jumping on the toe and at the same time moving slowly forward. These rhythmical movements are from time to time interrupted by a group of dancers violently rushing out of the circle, howling and shouting aloud, brandishing their spears with fierce looks, and performing mock fights or playing pantomimes, in which they exhibit very remarkable ability. Scenes from the hunting, pastoral and agricultural life are represented with such a dramatic vivacity that they richly deserve the applause they earn. DANCING AND WAR-PLAYS

On a given signal, spears, clubs and shields are laid aside and put together in one place, and now the second part, in which the girls partake, begins. The latter have till then been waiting in a separate place, where the female lookers-on are gathered. Each girl selects her own dancer. First the men form again a

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

754 demands a large fee, usually a cow. The patient sits down near the person
755 who is to treat him. The latter says: «You have come near me, therefore you will not die». He then grinds up a bit of wood, and putting it in water, makes the patient drink it.

754 The spell of the evil eye may be cast in the presence of people, and all present even to the victim may be ignorant of what is being done, though it may be known. The man with the evil eye may be seen staring at the victim. For that reason the Shilluks do not like to have a person look them in the eye. When a person stares at a Shilluk, he usually averts his eyes, or protests.

683 754 When the evil eye has been cast on a person, he very seldom tries to discover the identity of the person who bewitched him. Should the person boast of having done it, he will be fined as though he had killed a man. The victim may have seen the person staring at him, and directly accuse him of the act, but that is not always safe, as the case is brought before a medicine man. If the person accused of casting the evil eye shows fear he [627] is guilty, and must pay a fine equal to that paid for killing a man. If he shows no fear, it was a false accusation, and in that case the accuser must pay an equal fine for his false charge.

578 754 The motive for using the evil eye is usually envy or jealousy or anger, for the evil eye always picks a shining mark, it does not fall on poor people, nor is a poor thing bewitched. A poor man may occasionally be the victim of the evil eye, but it is always an accident, as he has eaten food that has been bewitched to catch a richer person. They take some precautions to avoid the evil eye.

751 754 If a person has some very choice food, it is covered so that the evil eye may not fall on it. Food is very often bewitched, but it is usually meat or fish that is tainted, and it is very seldom that food made from grain is affected. Food that has had the evil eye cast on it can be made fit to eat by giving some of it to a dog. They say that the dog takes off the eye. The milk of a cow that has been affected can be cleansed by taking some of it in a vessel, and pouring it on a fire. The fire is put out, and from that time the milk of that cow is safe to use. If these precautions are not taken, the food will cause nausea. After the nausea has passed, evil consequences may remain, or a person may be all right.

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

The natives weave their hair into fantastic shapes. If a person has very fine hair, he puts a few thorns in it to keep off the evil eye. Should the evil eye fall on his hair, his head would break out in sores.

When a person has his body well oiled or covered with some fine ashes, he is very likely to have the evil eye cast on him. To escape that misfortune he takes a cucumber like pod from a wild plant, and takes out the seeds. Some of the seeds are put on the temples, and some on the neck, and others on the tip of the shoulder blade, or the entire fruit may be worn suspended from the neck.

When butter is boiled to clarify it, the work is usually done at night so that the evil eye may not be cast on it.

The Shilluks will not say that they are in good circumstances, lest it be heard by some envious person, and he should cast the evil eye on their possessions. When a rich man is asked in regard to his property, he usually says I have one or two cows, but they are very poor cows.

The parents of a very fine looking child do not like to let people see it for fear someone will cast the evil eye on it, and the parent is very angry when someone comments on the good appearance of the child. Should the child be taken sick, the parents call on the person who made the remark, and demand that he pay the fine required when a person is killed. The accused usually holds out, and a compromise is affected. He brings a sheep, and one of its ears is cut off. The sheep then is a witness against the man, and by doing that, he assumes the responsibility for the child. If it dies, he pays the fine as though he had killed it. Even if the child reaches maturity and dies, the man is responsible and must pay the fine.

Frequently people have hard knots in their flesh. These are really stones that have been put there by someone with the evil eye. The swellings do not disappear.

The Shilluks have a custom that when a person is threshing his grain, they go to beg from him. Sometimes they go in such numbers that the man has very little left for himself, but he does not dare to refuse for fear someone in the party may cast the evil eye on him. He gets even by going to beg from some other person.

They give a few warnings as to conduct when with a person who has the evil eye.

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

626 If you walk with a person who has the evil eye, let him walk in front,
751 for if you go in front you give him a good chance to cast the evil eye on you.
754 When a person with the evil eye begs from you, grant his request, because when he accepts your present his power over you is broken, and he can not injure you. He may regain his power if he comes again and is refused, for if you refuse him, he becomes angry and casts the evil eye on you.

When eating, let the oldest of the party take the food first, so that if the evil eye has fallen on the food he may detect it, and the food can be cleansed.

When eating with a man who has the evil eye, do not eat much or he will kill you.

When you are angry at a certain village, do not enter that village or you will get the evil eye.

Do not speak harshly to a man who has the evil eye, or he will cast the spell on you.

754 Once a man gave his daughter to the king to be his wife. The girl had the evil eye, and when the king learned that fact, he gave the woman to another man lest she kill his other wives.

At the present time a chief is suffering from the evil eye. The people of another village had stolen his cow. He went to the village in anger, and talked harshly. While there he felt a chill run through his body. He went home, and took sick. His body has sores on it that have come from the evil eye.

The man with the power to cast the evil eye is feared by the people, but he is not feared as much as the evil medicine man. When he causes death, it is usually sudden, though it may be lingering. When a person
[761] with the evil eye dies, the people of the village rejoice, though they do not show their joy openly.

The possessors of the evil eye are deceived even as the people who fear them. They go through life apart from their fellow men in many respects. They believe in their own evil powers, and while their claims sound childish to us, yet we must consider the fact that the history of the English speaking world reveals the fact that our ancestors were afraid of witches, even after they had reached a much greater development than the Shilluk has attained.

11: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918)1919 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

[754] The evil medicine man takes advantage of the carelessness of the people. A man may be gathering the old stalks on his field to burn them, but fails to burn them that evening. An evil medicine man comes at night and burns them, and then the owner gets the ashes on his hands, and his hands swell. Or the large stick used in planting the grain may be left in the field at night, and the owner of the malignant power enters the field, and burns it. The grain will grow well till it gets to be almost ready to yield the harvest, when it is burned by the sun so that it dies. Water that is left in the garden over night may be defiled, and the people who drink it die.

The evil charmer is envious of the successful fisherman. He gets a bone of a fish that the man has caught. The fish bone is burned in the fire. That works a charm on the fish spear, so that in the future it will not be able to take the fish.

Accidents which terminate in blindness are caused by the evil medicine men.

[513] In the hot season, when the people sleep in their yards, the evil medicine man comes at night and sprinkles blood on the sleepers, and they die.

[751 764] After a person has been buried, the grave is watched for three or four nights lest the man of evil should take a bit of the earth, and by working a charm on it kill the whole family of the deceased; but after a short time he can not work that charm, so at the end of the fourth day the watchmen are dismissed.

[751 754] When with an evil medicine man it is well to be on the alert. When a person is sitting with a man of that class, when he gets up he should brush the ground where he has been sitting so as not to leave an imprint of his body for the man to use in his witchcraft. When a person sees such a man walking behind him, he should return, and if the man is stepping exactly in his tracks, he should be taken and made to ransom the man as he was killing him. It is not safe to sleep in the same house with them, as they may defile a person in his sleep. In eating with them it is best to stop before a person is satisfied. To strike an evil medicine man is to invite certain death. The people have the habit of asking a person to wash their backs when they are bathing. Should a person ask an evil medicine man to do that favour for him he will be very itchy all that night, and later have sores all over his back. [515]

13: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1920 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

756 Many of the people say that if a man refuses to consult the medicine men, God will be angry with that person, and leave him to get along without help, which means that he will be cut off from all supernatural aid.

Many of the witch doctors are specialists, while others undertake to work charms for many different things. In practically every thing [484] undertaken the witch doctor is consulted. If a man is going on 751 a journey he lets the medicine man work over him to give him safety from dangers seen and unseen. Very frequently before a [224] hunt the witch doctor assures them of success in the chase, and in the hunting of dangerous animals he ties the quarry so that it will not be able to injure the hunters. A thief who hopes to steal a cow often goes to a witch doctor, and has a charm wrought over him so that the people of the village will not be aroused by any [726] sound he may make. The witch doctor gives victory when the people are going out to war. He also detects the men, who are to be killed in the fight, and he works a charm over them, which causes the impending death to be averted. The power to kill by magic resides in the witch doctor, and many other things are done by them. Diseases are supposed to yield to their charms. The [752 755] power to cure snake bites, and to heal a burn by spitting on it are special powers belonging to only a few. Many are able to give a fetish, which protects its owner.

The witch doctor will not treat himself when ill, and he does not treat the members of his own family. He goes to some other witch doctor to be helped.

756 789 The fetish plays a very large part in the work of a witch doctor. He gives the little charms for many different purposes. They are supposed to give protection on a journey, to insure success in courtship, to protect from wild animals, to insure a favourable judgment, to protect cattle in crossing a river, and many other powers are ascribed to them. However a fetish is only effective for the one purpose for which it was obtained.

756 One medicine man, when asked how he cured a patient, said: "I first collect a small fee, and then I work over the patient. When the patient recovers I return and collect a large fee".

The dismissal of a patient is attended with some ceremony. The patient and witch doctor make a trip to the river in the evening.

726 the grain rattles, and that is God talking. The gourd is kept in
756 the medicine man's house, and an outsider is not permitted to
787 approach it. A small space is mudded in front of the gourd, and thus a little court is formed in front of it, and a mat is frequently placed in front of the gourd to give it greater privacy. When a fight is imminent the gourd of God is brought out, and each of the warriors casts his spoon on the gourd. For spoons they use mussel shells. When a spoon breaks it is a sign that the owner will be killed in the fight. When a bit is chipped from the spoon it is a sign that the owner will be wounded in the fight. When all the people have been tested the men who are indicated as liable to
[751] death are called, and they are told to bring a heavy fee, and the witch doctor goes through a form to avert the evil that is impending.

756 The gourd is used for other purposes as well. When a man
789 wishes to consult the gourd of God he is conducted into the house by the owner of the gourd, and the first thing the suppliant does is to cast the gift for God on the ground, which belongs to the owner of the gourd. He then kneels before the altar, and makes known the reason for his coming. The medicine man declares that is easy, and that it is already accomplished, and the gourd is rattled at his back, and also in front of him, and is then passed around his head in circles.

Recourse may also be had to the gourd of God when a man is going on a journey. After making his approach to the gourd, and stating his needs the medicine man takes two spoons. One which is dirty represents the suppliant, the other which is clean represents his enemy either known or unknown. The clean spoon is then put in water, so that the anger of the enemy will be cooled, and his thoughts will not be so bitter. Knotted grass is then put in the water with the clean spoon. That is a gag which binds the mouth of the enemy so that he can not speak against the suppliant. The gourd is then rolled across the road on which the traveller expects to start. The gourd is then rattled near his head, back and chest. The man then crouches in the house looking out toward the road on which he expects to travel. The medicine man then leaps over him, and then turns, and leaps over him the other way, and that is repeated. He is then advised to start on his journey, and is assured that nothing will injure. He starts, and the witch doctor

15: Oyler M-5 (ca. 1918) 1926 FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

342 782 821 the liver, stomach, heart, tongue, upper lip, lower lip, and lungs. The walls of the house are then pushed down, and these bits are cast on the mound. They are to be thrown by a servant of Deń. The soup in which the meat was cooked is taken by the chief servant of Deń present, and the next in rank takes a gourd of beer, and they pour these upon the mound at the same time that the meat is thrown on it. The people then dance, while they sing a song of Deń. While the servants of Deń put the higlig branch (ȳk Deń) in place, the rest of the people run to the river to take a bath.

751 821 At the close of the rainy season the family of the person who has been struck by lightning invite the people of the village to drink beer. One gourd full of the beer is thrown into the air for Deń. This observance often becomes an annual event in the family. They think it helps to keep the lightning away.

342 821 778 A house is never built on the exact location of a house that has been struck by lightning, though another may be built near the place. An object that has been struck by lightning is sometimes worshipped. Sacrifices may be killed and eaten in front of it.

177 Many of these ceremonies are borrowed from the Dinkas. Deń is worshipped by the Dinkas; they are "Deń's people." He is the spirit of the rain, or the rain.

132 000 The rains at the beginning and close of the rainy season are very often accompanied by considerable electrical displays. It is small wonder that the natives behold in amazed terror the wonderful power of nature, and it is still less cause to marvel that they try to placate the powers of the storm. The westerner, with his scientific knowledge of electricity, is often awed by the gleam of the lightning and the crash of thunder, and it is not surprising that the uneducated native is even more awed by it.

Rites connected with the Dance Initiation.

882 The Shilluk lad looks forward with eagerness to the time when he will be permitted to join in the dances of his people. Not only does he long for the time because of the social pleasure, as dancing is the chief amusement of the people, but the right to dance carries with it other privileges.

29:Dempsey M-5 (1940-1954) 1955
FJ23 Shilluk FJ23

like bellows, and then passes it on. Pipe and beer circulate freely, and under the mellowing influence of both, tongues are quickly loosened and conversation turns to the perennial topic of cattle. After a while, your cigarette finished, you will excuse yourself to your host and, rising from your cramped position, greet everyone present in turn and make your escape into the open air.

The Shilluk, sensible man, starts his day with the sun. He emerges from his hut, however, with heavy head and blood-shot eyes, since he has been sleeping for seven or eight hours in a small windowless hut with the doorway blocked with a heavy grass mat and perhaps a smoky fire burning as a protection against mosquitoes. As a further defence against these pests he covers himself from head to foot with the red ashes from the cow-dung fire, but this does not worry him; if there is water handy he may rinse his hands and face, if not, he will remain as he is until his next visit to the river —perhaps today, perhaps tomorrow or the next day—gives him the chance of taking a bath.

Gradually the village comes to life: the women appear, winding their drab-looking cloths round them, and set off on their daily pilgrimage to the river with the heavy water pots balanced on their heads. The little group breaks up and the women fall into line, one behind the other, as they reach the narrow track leading out of the village, chattering like starlings as they swing along. The boys come out of the byre smothered like their elders in the red ashes in which they have been lying all night, looking like imps from the lower regions. They begin to clean up round the tethered cattle, collecting the cow dung and spreading it out to dry in the sun for fuel. When this is done they milk the cows and goats. From one compound comes the sound of dull thumping as some girl pounds the millet grain into coarse flour. The grain is small and hard, red or white in colour. It is first winnowed by being poured at shoulder height from a basket and then sieved in a boat-shaped scoop of plaited fibre. The grain is then put into a